

SERMONS FOR
THE KING'S
CORONATION

1902



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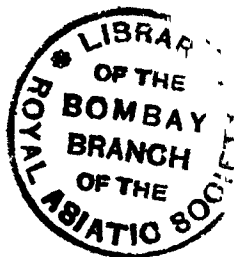
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Dean of Canterbury

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BY THE VERY REV.

FREDERIC WILLIAM FARRAR, M.A., D.D.

DEAN OF CANTERBURY



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Sermon I

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF A CORONATION

PSALM LXXII. 1-2

“Give the King Thy judgments, O God ; and Thy righteousness
unto the King's son.”



CORONATION is an event of deep religious significance. From the earliest times it has been so regarded, and it is frequently alluded to in Holy Scripture. We read in the Book of Kings of the triumphant rejoicings when Zadok the priest and Nathan the seer anointed Solomon king. We have some reflections of the splendour of the ceremonial in the 21st, 45th and 72nd Psalms ; and the fact that kings are so often spoken of as “the Lord's anointed” shows that the ceremonial gave a special character of sacredness to chosen sovereigns.

It is for this reason that in all countries, but perhaps especially in our own, a coronation is not only surrounded with every adjunct of magni-

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ficence; but is also invested with special and sacred solemnity. The fact that our coronations are performed in Westminster Abbey gives them a new and deeper suggestiveness—for it is not only the church in which our monarchs are invested with the insignia of royalty, but also the final resting-place of many of them, even from Saxon times. There are the splendid tombs of Edward the Confessor, of Edward I., of Richard II., of Henry VII. and his Queen, of Mary and Elizabeth, and of Mary Queen of Scots. There also rest the remains of the two Princes, Edward V. and his brother, who were murdered in the Tower; and there—strange to say without any tombs—lie the remains of James I., of Charles II. and his Queen, of William and Mary, and of other members of our royal families. Every act in the Coronation Service is invested with religious meaning. The use of the consecrated oil; the partaking of the Holy Communion; the laying on of hands; the presentation to the King of the Holy Scriptures with the words, "This is the best Book in the world"; the solemn seating of the King on the throne over "a base fowl stone" made precious by the foil of England's chair"—which, if it was not that stone upon which the head of the patriarch Jacob rested when he saw his vision (as tradition used to assert), is almost

Of a Coronation So

certainly the stone on which St Columba was resting when he died; the presence of all the most exalted ecclesiastical dignitaries, together with the solemn and special prayers, make of a coronation a scene which cannot fail to leave a very deep impression on the minds of every seriously-disposed witness of that event.

The coronation of our King, Edward VII., will be the thirty-fifth that has taken place since the days of William the Conqueror, and the event will be all the more memorable because Queen Alexandra will be crowned with her Royal husband. Owing to the exceptionally long reign of our late beloved Queen, there are few living persons who witnessed her coronation, which took place on Thursday, June 28th, 1838. It has, however, been described by one who, as a youth, was present on that intensely interesting occasion. "Men will long remember," says Dean Stanley, "the early summer morning, when, at break of day, the streets were thronged, and the whole capital awoke—the first sight of the Abbey, crowded with the mass of gorgeous spectators, themselves a pageant—the electric shock through the whole mass, when the first gun announced that the Queen was on her way—and the thrill of expectation with which the iron rails seemed to tremble in the hands of the spectators, as the

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long procession closed with the entrance of the small figure, marked out from all beside by the regal train and attendants, floating like a crimson and silvery cloud behind her. At the moment when she first came within the full view of the Abbey, and paused, as if for breath, with clasped hands,—as she moved on, to her place by the altar,—as in the deep silence of the vast multitude, the tremulous voice of Archbishop Howley could be faintly heard, even to the remotest corners of the Choir, asking for the Recognition—as she sat immovable on the throne, when the crown touched her head, amidst shout and trumpet and the roar of cannon, there must have been many who felt a hope that the loyalty which had waxed cold in the preceding reigns would once more revive, in a more serious form than it had, perhaps, ever worn before. Other solemnities they may have seen more beautiful, or more strange, or more touching, but none at once so gorgeous and so impressive, in recollections, in actual sight, and in promise of what was to be.”

There can be no doubt that the solemnities of the coronation, added to all the other influences of her life, deeply impressed the mind of Her Majesty Queen Victoria. Our great poet rightly says of her,—

Of a Coronation

"Her court was pure ; her life serene ;
God gave her peace ; her land reposed ;
A thousand claims to reverence closed
In her as Mother, Wife, and Queen."

I may perhaps be allowed to mention an anecdote which may serve as one small illustration of that deep religious feeling which, throughout the Queen's life, manifested itself in the tenderness of her sympathy for all who suffered among her people, and in that vivid sense of duty, directed by remarkable wisdom, which has earned for her alone among English sovereigns the title of Victoria "The Good." On one occasion one of her chaplains, in preaching before her at Windsor, had made the Second Advent the subject of his discourse. After the sermon the Queen spoke to him on the topic which he had chosen, and said, "Oh, how I wish that the Lord might come during my own lifetime!" "Why," asked the preacher, "does your Majesty feel this earnest desire?" "Oh," replied the Queen, with quivering lips and with her whole countenance lighted by deep emotion, "I should so love to lay my crown at His feet." The anecdote illustrates the feelings which dominated the Queen's mind, and we do not wonder that the poet wrote,—

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" May you rule us long,
And leave us rulers of your blood
As noble till the latest day !
May children of our children say,
She wrought her people lasting good."

We all of us most earnestly desire that the coming Coronation of our King may be attended with the brightest and happiest omens. We hope that it may not only be gorgeous but also pervaded with the most solemn and sacred associations in the minds of all. In the service the King is addressed by the Archbishop in the noble words,—

"Be strong and of a good courage. Observe the commandments of God, and walk in His holy ways. Fight the good fight of faith and lay hold of eternal life: that in this world you may be crowned with success and honour, and, when you have finished your course, may receive a crown of righteousness, which God the righteous Judge shall give you in that day."

Of the previous coronations not a few have been attended by saddening or ill-omened incidents. At the coronation of William the Conqueror there was a sudden panic which might very easily have ended in a massacre. That of Stephen "teemed with omens of the misfortunes which thickened round the unhappy king": the archbishop died within the year, and the magnates who assisted all perished miserably; the Host given at the

Of a Coronation &c

Communion suddenly disappeared and the customary kiss of peace was forgotten. The coronation of the son of Henry II. ended practically in the murder of Becket, and the young Prince himself died by an untimely death. At that of Richard I. the superstitious were terrified by a bat which fluttered round the King's throne, and by a mysterious peal of bells for which no one could account, as also by an attack upon the Jews. That of Edward II. and his murderous wife Isabella was rendered odious by the insolence of his vile favourite, Piers Gaveston, and by the fact that Sir John Bakewell was trampled to death. That of Henry V. was darkened by a terrible thunderstorm. That of Charles I. teemed with omens of disaster: the plague was raging; Charles appeared in white satin instead of purple velvet; the left wing of the dove on the sceptre was broken off and the tremors of an earthquake were felt while the King was being crowned. At the coronation of Charles II. the Earls of Northumberland and Ossory quarrelled as to the right of carrying the insignia, and the King's footmen • had a desperate struggle with the Barons of the Cinque Ports for the Royal Canopy. In the evening there was a tremendous storm of rain, thunder and lightning. At the coronation of James II. the crown tottered on the King's head, and had to be

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held up by Henry Sidney. Queen Anne, though only thirty-seven, was suffering from gout and had to be supported as she stood upright. It was noticed also that the crown left a deep red mark upon her forehead. On the day on which George I. was crowned there were Jacobite riots. The Pretender, Prince Charles Edward, was secretly present at the coronation of George III., and remarked to a friend, "The person who is the cause of all this pomp is the man I envy least." George IV. nearly fainted during the service, and his coronation was darkened by the repulse of his Queen from the doors of the Abbey.*

We are glad to remember that other coronations have been not only splendid but peaceful and happy, and we feel a certain hope that this will be the case with the coronation of our King and Queen.

Those who witness the magnificent pageantry of a coronation, in which the monarch is the cynosure of every eye, or who look on at the superb scene as it rolls through the streets of London on its way to Westminster, may perhaps regard a king as one who is to be supremely^o envied. But the Pretender was right when he remarked at the coronation of George III. that the King was the man whom in that vast assembly

* For many of these details see Dean Stanley's *Westminster Abbey*.

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he envied least. An awful weight of responsibility inevitably rests upon the sovereign of a mighty people ; and there are times of distress and danger when he must feel the

“ Desperate currents of a whole world’s anguish
Poured through the channels of a single heart.”

Many great rulers have testified that

“ ’Tis better to be humbly born
And live with lowly dwellers in content,
Than to be perk’d up in a glistening grief
And wear a golden sorrow.”

Roman Emperors were perhaps the most powerful rulers who ever lived, but many of them bore witness to the trials of their lot. The mighty Emperor Tiberius, with all the pleasure and wealth of the world at his command, was, as Pliny the Elder said, “ *Tristissimus, ut constat, hominum* ”—Confessedly the gloomiest of mankind.

Septimius Severus, at the close of a life of dazzling success, exclaimed, “ *Omnia fui, et nihil expedit* ”—I have been everything, and nothing is of any avail. The holy and noble Emperor Marcus Aurelius compared life to “a bone cast to little dogs, a bit of bread in fish-ponds, and the burden-carrying ‘hurrying to and fro of little frightened mice.”

To turn to Emperors of other races and other centuries, Abdurrahman the Magnificent left it on

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record that he had lived a life of splendour and success, victorious over his enemies and beloved by his friends, yet, that in all his life he could only count fourteen happy days. Shakespeare, therefore, a poet of deeper insight than any who have ever lived, was right* when he put into the mouth of Henry V. the words, "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown"; and when he makes Henry VI. exclaim,—

"My crown is in my heart, not on my head,
Not made of diamonds or Indian stones,
Nor to be seen :—my crown is called Content,
A crown it is which seldom kings enjoy."

We may, however, be well assured that, owing to our constitutional privileges and the long growth of liberty and independence in our national institution, no royalty has greater chance of happiness than that of England. We shall all pray, and we all most earnestly desire, that to our new King may be granted such wisdom from above as may secure him from all dangers and keep him in all prosperity amid the love and reverence of his people, for

"Titles are shadows ; crowns are empty things ;
The good of subjects is the end of kings."

The real significance of a coronation arises from the fact that every monarch must inevitably exercise

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a powerful influence alike on the destinies and the character of the nation. Great and warlike kings like the Conqueror, and Edward III., and Henry V. have enlarged the domains of England and added grandeur to her memories. Weak and foolish kings like Richard II. and Edward II. have done incredible harm by their evil example. Kings like John and James II. have been a positive curse to their nation. Even sovereigns of high personal character like Henry VI., and Queen Mary, and George III., if they have shown weakness or ill-advised obstinacy, have been the cause of terrible national disasters. Few, indeed, have been the monarchs who, by the excellence of their character, the clearness of their insight, and the depth of their religious feelings, have accomplished all which might otherwise have been in their power. Our present King and Queen will be inspired at their coronation by the blessed memory of those beautiful associations which surround the whole long reign of their beloved and honoured mother ; and many thousands of hearts will be uplifted for them in the intense and heartfelt supplication that they may have grace to continue the holy traditions of royalty which are thus their immediate inheritance.

May God's merciful hand ever be over them !
May His blessed protection ever be with them !

❖ The Significance of a Coronation

The King will still bear in mind the memorable day when, "pale as yet and fever worn,"

"He scarce had plucked his flickering life again
From halfway down the shadow of the grave ;"

and when on his way to the Thanksgiving Service in St Paul's Cathedral, side by side in the carriage with his Royal mother, he passed through the midst of the people,

❖ "And London rolled one tide of joy, through all
Her trebled millions, and loud leagues of man,
And welcome ;"—

and when, as it is said, amid the special bursts of acclamation, the Queen put her hand lovingly on that of the Prince and exclaimed, "All this is for you."

We doubt not that he and his Consort will ever show themselves worthy of that intensely loyal affection, and we pray that their reign may ever be remembered as an epoch of the highest national prosperity, and may leave behind it unbroken memories of peace, of happiness, of decided moral and religious progress, and of the highest influences for good to the mighty Empire which God has entrusted to their Royal care.



The Crown of Precious Stones

BY THE
REV. J. B. C. MURPHY, B.A.

CHAPLAIN TO H.M. FORCES

Author of "Plain-Spoken Sermons," "Till the Night is Gone," etc., etc.



Sermon II

THE CROWN OF PRECIOUS STONES

PSALM XXI. 1, 3

"The King shall joy in Thy strength, O Lord ; and in Thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice !

"For Thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness : Thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head."



WE have been accustomed, perhaps, to consider these words only in their figurative and mystical sense, as referring to Christ, the King of Glory, crowned, in the Incarnation, with our human nature—crowned, at His Ascension, with majesty, dominion and power for evermore. We have not realised that they bear another and a literal interpretation also. Yet they refer, in the first instance, to an actual coronation, barbaric in its splendour, dramatic in its surroundings, unique in character, which took place in the far-off days of Bible story, "when kings went forth to battle."

The words are, in fact, part of a triumph-song written by David, the poet-king of Israel, to commemorate the successful termination of the last

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and greatest of his many wars—the Ammonitish war—and the fall of the stronghold Rabbath-Ammon.

This Rabbah, “the royal city,” or “city of waters,” as it was indifferently called, had been closely invested for many months by Joab, the skilful, if unscrupulous, Commander-in-Chief of the armies of Israel. And at last the besieged were worn out, and the end drew near. Then Joab had sent a message to the king in Jerusalem, bidding him hurry up with reinforcements, that the fortress might be carried by assault and the city called by David’s name. So “David gathered all the people together, and went to Rabbah, and fought against it, and took it. And he took their king’s crown from off his head, the weight whereof was a talent of gold with the precious stones: and it was set on David’s head.”

But Rabbah was not only the strong natural fortress of the children of Ammon; it was also a stronghold and chief centre of the worship of the terrible god Moloch, whom the Ammonites indeed commonly spoke of as their king! A colossal figure of the idol dominated the heights of the city, and on the head of the figure was a glorious crown, set with precious stones, to some of which were ascribed magnetic and magic powers. The overthrow of Rabbah was signalised and completed by the over-

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throw and demolition of the great idol. From the shattered figure the crown was taken, and *this* was the crown that was placed upon the head of the victorious king of Israel:—"And he took their king's crown from off his head . . . and it was set on David's head."

It is to this unique coronation, the final event in the last of David's conquests, that the words of the text refer. David ascribes the power, and the victory, and the glory, and the majesty, to the God of battles, Who had given him rest from his enemies round about him, Who had "prevented him with the blessings of goodness, and set a crown of pure gold" (Vulgate—"precious stones") "upon his head."

The character of that crown was wholly altered. Purified from its heathen pollutions, rescued from its evil, hideous surroundings, it was consecrated to better, nobler uses, as the crown of a monarch whose joy was in the strength of the Lord of Hosts, and whose delight was in the salvation of the Almighty.

Its meaning and symbolism were wholly changed. On the head of the idol it symbolised the power and dominion of the Evil One; it proclaimed the hideousness and the hopelessness and the terrors of that awful religion which demanded human sacrifices, and a god to whom service was rendered

in deadly fear, amid groans and tears and blood. Its flashing stones represented the lurid fires lit by the demons in their ghastly orgies amid the ruins and the wreckage of human souls and bodies.

But now all this was changed. The armies of the God of Heaven had triumphed over the worshippers of idols; light had gained the victory over darkness; good had conquered evil. The crown of precious stones was become a crown of righteousness and truth, its sparkling gems symbolical of the beauty of holiness, proclaiming the graces and virtues of a life dedicated to the service of Jehovah, and the ennobling, transforming gifts bestowed upon the children of men by the Spirit of the living God.

Well might David rejoice, not only in the material victory gained that day at Rabbah, but in the fresh lustre added to his name and throne by the triumph of holiness and truth over a false and hideous system:—"The king shall rejoice in Thy strength, O Lord; exceeding glad shall he be of Thy salvation. . . Thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness. Thou settest a crown of pure gold upon his head."

It is a far cry from Rabbath-Ammon, its final siege and fall, the entry of David's victorious army into its citadel, the terrible scenes of carnage

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in its ancient streets, and that strange coronation of the Israelitish king—it is a far cry and a happy one to our own peaceful, prosperous metropolis and the gorgeous pageant which has delighted the millions who have thronged its streets and thoroughfares to-day, and the loud acclamations of a loyal, rejoicing people, and finally to the solemn scenes enacted within the Abbey's sacred walls—the Coronation of our Sovereign Lord the King and his beloved, gracious Consort, on whom are centred the thoughts and prayers of their devoted people throughout the world this day.

And yet, wide as the poles asunder as they are seen to be—the one coronation and the other—in setting, in circumstance, in character—the words of the text have a message and a meaning for us and for our King also—"Thou hast prevented him with the blessings of goodness. . . Thou settest a crown of pure gold upon his head."

One coronation brings with it memories of other coronations. The scene in Westminster Abbey to-day is, in the main, a repetition of like scenes witnessed within those grey walls—some in days of stress and storm; some amid ominous mutterings, gloomy discontent and sullen acquiescence; some amid the whole-hearted rejoicings of loyal hearts in days of sunshine and contentment, of universal gladness and of peace—when England's kings and

of The Crown of

queens have been crowned and anointed there to their high and sacred office.

For we are not of yesterday. The history of our race is the history of long, eventful centuries. The national life, the national Church, our national institutions, our free Constitution, these all have their roots embedded deep in a long past, hoary with age, rich in glorious traditions. And as we think of the rude barbaric Britain, which was the cradle of the race, and then trace this nation's rise and growth down to the present day, when its flag floats in well-nigh every portion of the globe, we see the changes Time has worked; we look upon the glorious heritage which is ours to-day, and we say, with hearts full of wonder and of gratitude, "What hath God wrought?"

For we remember that Britain's crown—a crown studded with the glorious flashing stones of freedom and justice, of righteousness and equity, bright with the rich jewels of a free people's loyalty and love and devotion—was once a crown which adorned the idol's head. Our own fair England was once the home of a false, idolatrous worship. In our own beautiful forests stood the altars on which human sacrifices were offered, and their noble oaks were polluted with blood-bespattered leaves. Our fair glades rang with the shrieks of perishing victims, "and the land was defiled with blood."

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Then came a day when the Gospel reached these shores. "Great David's greater Son" laid siege to the fair land where devils reigned, and took it. A victory greater far than David's victory at Rabbath-Ammon was gained. Britain was won for God. Righteousness and peace entered in and dwelt here. The heathen ruler gave place in time to the Christian Prince, on whose head the Lord Jehovah "set a crown of pure gold"—a crown transformed and purified, set with the precious stones of mercy and of truth, of Christian faith and hope and love.

And then, as the years went on, and the kingdom grew, and the Empire was founded and prospered, gems more, and more precious still, were added to England's crown, until, in the last reign, the reign of the greatest Queen in history, that Empire spread to earth's remotest bounds; so that on the head of our own King Edward VII. is set to-day "a crown of precious stones" which is the wonder and the admiration of the whole earth.

And Who is He that hath done these mighty deeds for us, and in our midst? Who but He to Whom David ascribed the victory at Rabbah long centuries ago. He "Who sitteth over all from the beginning"—"King of kings and Lord of lords!" To Him the King comes to do public

homage for his crown to-day; to receive from Him, at the hands of His ambassadors, the crown which is His alone to give, from Whom all authority and power are derived, and by Whose permission kings rule.

And herein lies the very meaning and inwardness of the whole Coronation service and ceremonial. For what mean we by this service—the coronation and “sacring of the King”? That may be the unspoken query of some hearts and minds to-day. The King is king already. He has ascended the throne by undoubted right. He has been duly proclaimed by heralds—acclaimed by lusty, cheering crowds. He reigns already in the hearts and affections of his people. The gorgeous pageant of the Coronation follows. But, it may be asked, if this historic, picturesque ceremony be indispensable, why need it take place within the Abbey’s sacred walls? Why not in Westminster Hall? Why should not the King of England be crowned by the Lord Chancellor of England, or other great Officer of State? Why a solemn *religious* service, such as this to-day?

Because we are a Christian people, ruled by a Christian King. Because the national instinct is, thank God, a religious instinct. Because the nation’s life, in its secular and religious aspects, are so closely interwoven and intertwined, that

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he who would rudely tear them apart would be dealing a blow that would paralyse the nation's corporate energies, and threaten its corporate life. Blind to its truest interests would the generation be that could contemplate such a severance; false to its country's highest and noblest traditions; treacherous to its God!

Therefore we bear, and will continue to bear, this our public witness to the Sovereignty of the Almighty in the Coronation of our kings. Thus we make our great national recognition of Him Who is King of kings and "Lord over all." Thus we invoke the Divine blessing and protection for the King's Majesty; and thus we invest him, in the crowning and the sacring, with power from on high, translating into deeds, rich in symbolism, the words we so often sing with our lips—"God save the King!" And thus it is that the first act of the newly-anointed Sovereign is to lay aside his kingly crown and sceptre, and meekly kneeling upon his knees, to receive the sacred Body and Blood of Christ for the preservation of his body and soul unto everlasting life.

And so, crowned and anointed, the King goes forth, followed by the earnest prayers of his people, to discharge the high duties, and to fulfil the sacred trust of his exalted position, in days which, if they are days of some anxiety and care,

are full also of high promise and of hope. For the Coronation of King Edward VII. as head of the mightiest Empire the world has ever seen, synchronises, most happily, with the nation's clearer, higher views of what the burden of Empire means. The sad, trying times through which we have been passing have not been without their compensation if they have served to make us more thoughtful, more sober and serious than in past days; less frivolous and less self-complacent; more ready to recognise and to discharge a high Imperial trust, than to talk and to bluster about an Imperial position and Imperial greatness.

From my heart I believe that it is so. God grant it may ever be so! God grant this glad Coronation Day may be the opening of a new chapter of our national history, full of high aims and hopes, rich in glorious ideals, which, if they seem but visionary and poetical to some, it shall be our steadfast endeavour to translate into the prose of accomplished facts.

One more historic scene has been added to the many glorious scenes witnessed in our ancient Abbey. One more Sovereign, crowned and anointed within its stately precincts, goes forth, amid the thunder of the saluting guns and the enthusiastic acclamations of rejoicing crowds, to wield the sceptre of truth and righteousness, of justice and of equity, in the government of a great

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free people, ready to lay down their lives, if need be, for their country and their King. | God be with him now and evermore, our Sovereign Lord the King, and with his gracious, queenly Consort. The God of Heaven prevent them, day by day, with the blessings of goodness, and finally, when life's race is run, set upon their heads the Crown of Life, which fadeth not away. Amen.



The True Inwardness of a Coronation

BY THE
REV. CANON HAMMOND, LL.B.
VICAR OF ST AUSTELL

Suitable for Before the Coronation



Sermon III

THE TRUE INWARDNESS OF A CORONATION

I SAM. XVI. 12

“And the Lord said, Arise, anoint him : for this is he.”

IS there a corner of the British Empire, though on that Empire “the sun never sets,” is there hamlet or settlement therein, however remote, that has not heard, that has not rejoiced to hear, that on Thursday, the 26th of June, our good King Edward, the seventh to bear that name since the Norman conquest, will be solemnly crowned and anointed—anointed and crowned in the same venerable sanctuary at Westminster where, for eight hundred years, the Sovereigns of this realm have, one after the other, been invested with their dignities, and, seated on the throne of St Edward the Confessor, have heard the shouts of their subjects? And is there a strand, though it be swept “by the long wash of Australasian waves,”

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is there mining camp or lumberer's cabin in the Canadian forests, however lone it may be, is there grim blockhouse on the African veldt, is there squalid village in the Deccan or Bengal, that will not join with us on that day in acclaiming him King—King both of Great and of Greater Britain: of our dominions beyond the seas as much as of the mother country—and Emperor of India? The continents and islands, the cities and villages, nay, the very tents of Kedar that wept with us over the bier of our late beloved Queen, will now rejoice with us as they see her son mounting her throne and wearing her crown; yes, and some of them will ask for him God's grace and benediction that he may tread in his mother's footsteps and govern this great people, this world-wide Empire, in the fear and love of God.

And yet, fixed as our thoughts have been and will be on the Coronation of our King, so long anticipated and now so near at hand, it may be doubted whether there are many of our own countrymen, not to speak of our fellow-subjects of other climes and creeds, who realise what this rite of coronation means, or, let me say, who have grasped its "true inwardness." We all, I have little doubt, have some understanding of the order of the proceedings: we have read of the singular pomp and circumstance and solemnity which will mark this great occasion,

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the most august ceremony of our national life ; we may know what dignitaries and dukes and princes will be there and what parts will be assigned to them, but the essential thing, the *meaning* of the service, its *significance* for the King, and its *message* for us his subjects, that perhaps we have yet as a rule to learn. There is some excuse for us : a coronation is of such rare occurrence. In this country, happily for us, there has been no such event for sixty-four years. Still, when it does arrive, we owe it to ourselves and to our King, yes, and to the King of kings, to penetrate beneath the surface, beneath the outward show and ceremonial, and to master the principles which underlie these complicated rites. For this is—need I say it?—no mere State function ; it is from beginning to end a religious office. Why, it is held in the temple of God, and it is performed by the ministers of God ; most of the ceremonial, indeed, is imbedded in the Communion Office. Every Churchman, therefore, every Christian, should surely be able to answer the question, “What mean ye by this service?” and to say why King Edward will be thus anointed and invested and crowned and enthroned before the altar of God. And this is what I shall now endeavour to explain.

It is not, I need hardly say to you, for the purpose of *making* him King. He is King already by virtue of his descent ; for over a year he has acted as our

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Sovereign Lord and we have prayed for him as such. Nor is it merely, or principally, for the purpose of *recognising* him as monarch, or *proclaiming* or *confirming* him as such. That will, no doubt, among other things, be done, but it is obvious that for that purpose neither Church nor bishop, neither unction nor oblation, is required ; and more than that, he has been proclaimed as King long ago, and long ago was he everywhere acknowledged as such. It must be for some other reason, therefore, that the stately procession, perhaps the most varied and brilliant that the world has ever seen, will wend its way through the crowded streets to the ancient Abbey Church and pass up to the very altar of our Christ. Yes, and the reason is this : he goes before God, this new King, to be *consecrated*, to be *sealed* and *set apart*, by prayer and unction and benediction, as God's minister, God's officer, God's deputy : he goes not merely to invoke the blessing of God on his reign and his realm, not merely to be admonished as to his duties, but also to receive the grace of God, which is so freely given to all that ask, for the discharge of his solemn obligations : goes, in fact, to be marked and stamped before his subjects and the world as holding his exalted office under God, and by God, and for God. In one word, the main object of the service is this—that our King may receive the sanction, the consecration, the benediction of the King Eternal,

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the Blessed and only Potentate. He will enter the church as the undoubted and lawfully-constituted monarch of this realm: he will leave it as the anointed and ordained viceroy of the Most High; he will come back to us with the imprint of God on the crown of his head and the palms of his hands, and, we trust, with the strength of God in his heart and soul. To stamp our King as God's King and to procure for him God's grace—this is what the coronation means.

And here let me say that one ancient name of this service—"the *Sacring* of the King"—clearly expresses this to be its design. Our fathers, in what we call "the Dark Ages," had not mis-read their Bibles when they not only crowned, but anointed their monarchs in the house of God. They had learned from these Bibles that the Hebrew king was "the Lord's anointed"—a sacred personage, hedged about with Divinity, and no mere secular prince; that he was in some high sense God's "priest";* they had read, moreover, that even pagan rulers were "ordained of God," and were "the ministers of God."† Do you wonder, then, that they concluded that Christian kings could be no less, or that they desired to have England's King set apart with psalm and prayer

* 2 Sam. vi. 14; viii. 18, R. V.

† Rom. xiii. 1-4.

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and sacrament, and hallowed with all the solemnities of our religion. Just as they believed in the consecration of the bishop, so they believed in the "sacring" of the king, and for a similar reason: the former had the oversight of God's Church committed to him, the latter of God's realm. In their eyes, then, a coronation was no empty form—and indeed Christianity has no place for such vanities: it was a means of grace, a rite of ordination; it left its mark and imprint, for good or evil, on the monarch; it made him, they believed, a sort of spiritual person, and capable of spiritual jurisdiction.

But let us turn to the service—or to the last Coronation Service—and see what *its* language is, for it will speak for itself; the very "Form and Order" that is used will reveal to us the ideas which underlie it.

What are the first words that will fall on the ear as the King and his lords pass up the nave and into the choir? They are those of the *Anthem*—and that strikes the keynote of the whole service—"I was glad when they said unto me, 'We will go into the house of the Lord.'" But why glad? Because "*there* is the seat of judgment, even the seat of the house of David." On God and His law both authority and royalty rest. And so, in the house of God the Archbishop presents the King to

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the people and challenges their allegiance, and there, in the presence of God, they render to the King their and our homage, for they are our representatives. And what next? Then the King makes his first *oblation*. Humbly kneeling on the steps of the altar, he delivers to the Archbishop a "pall or altar cloth of gold," and a "wedge of gold of a pound weight." This is his tribute to the Majesty of Heaven, and as such it is "reverently laid upon the altar." He tenders it, as the Archbishop states, "in acknowledgment of God's sovereignty over all." He thus expressly recognises his dependence on, and his responsibility to, a Higher Power, though this the rite in every part implies. But let us, passing by details (such, for example, as the oath which the monarch swears on the Gospels to govern righteously and constitutionally, the *covenant* which he makes with his people and with God), let us come at once to the heart and core of the service, the *anointing*. We observe that it is preceded by the *Veni Creator*, a hymn for the help and blessing of the Holy Ghost, and by another prayer, which, it is to be noticed, follows the lines of that before the laying on of hands in the Confirmation Office—in fact, it contains the same words—"Strengthen him, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost the Comforter." What can be clearer than that we are to look for the manifold gifts of the Spirit in the

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one case as in the other; we are to expect, through the form and channel of anointing, the grace and power of the Blessed Comforter. It is for this that the Archbishop presently prays: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God . . . by His Holy anointing, pour down upon your head and heart the blessing of the Holy Ghost and prosper the work of your hands." And why should we doubt that that gift will be bestowed, if we and our King alike desire it? Is not the Father of our spirits more ready to give than we are to receive, and wont to give more than either we desire or deserve? O, let us not doubt, but earnestly believe, that with the "outward and visible sign" there will be the "inward and spiritual grace"; only impenitence or unbelief can hinder it. And that, let me remind you, is by no means the only prayer that is offered; at every stage of the ceremonial there is a corresponding supplication; everything is done with prayer; everything has the mark of the Cross; everything has the stamp of religion; even the *spurs* and the *sword*, emblems of power, are brought from the altar of Christ to be presented to the King, and to that altar they are straightway returned. And with them this petition is offered to God—"Hear our prayers, O Lord, we beseech Thee, and so direct and support Thy servant, King Edward, that he may not bear the sword in vain;" and then

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this admonition is addressed to the monarch: "Receive this kingly sword, brought now from the altar of God and delivered to you by the hands of us, the bishops and servants of God, though unworthy. With this sword do justice, stop the growth of iniquity, protect the holy Church of God, help and defend widows and orphans," etc. Similarly, when he is invested with the *royal robe*, or *dalmatic*—an ecclesiastical garment, I may remind you, as if for a priest; it now has the shape of a cope—the Archbishop prays: "The Lord clothe you with the robe of righteousness and with the garments of salvation;" and as the King takes into his hand the *orb*, or ball of gold, surmounted with a cross, he is bidden to "remember"—that emblem, in fact, is to remind him—that "the whole world is subject to the power and empire of Christ our Redeemer." With the delivery of the *ring*, "the ensign of kingly dignity and defence of the Catholic faith"—that ring has a cross inlaid in the stone—goes the prayer that "As you are this day solemnly invested in the government of this earthly kingdom, so you may be sealed with that spirit of promise which is the earnest of a heavenly inheritance," whilst at the putting on of the *crown* the Primate will pray: "O God, Who crownest Thy faithful servants with mercy and loving-kindness, look down upon this Thy servant, Edward our King . . . and as Thou dost this day

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set a crown of pure gold upon his head, so enrich his royal heart with Thy heavenly grace and crown him with all princely virtues." When the *Bible*, again, is put into his hands, just as it is given into the hands of a bishop, it is with these words among others: "Our gracious King, we present you with this book, the most valuable thing that this world affords. Here is wisdom; this is the royal law. These are the lively oracles of God. Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this book; that keep and do the things contained in it." And this again is followed by the *Benediction* and the *Te Deum*, the former bespeaking grace for the King, the latter giving glory and praise to God. And lastly, when the King ascends the theatre or platform, and is lifted up into his *throne*, just as Gothic chief or Roman emperor was elevated on a shield, it will be with the prayer, "The Lord God Almighty establish your throne in righteousness, that it may stand fast for evermore, like as the sun before Him, and as the faithful witness in heaven." So that every feature of the service is sacramental and deeply significant; there is not a rite that is not steeped in religion; everything speaks of the Lord and King of the universe; everything reminds our King that he is God's minister; at every turn he is admonished of his need of God's grace; in every possible way is that grace besought for him. Nor does the

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coronation come to an end until he has joined in the chief means of grace—the Holy Communion of our Saviour's Body and Blood. Not until he has been fortified with the Bread that God gives and the Wine that He has mingled ; not until the only merits of our Redeemer have been pleaded before God for pardon and for grace and blessing, will King Edward the Seventh be the duly, the religiously crowned and anointed King of this realm.

Ah, but there is a part for us to play in this coronation : we have our duties to discharge as well as King or Archbishop. On the character of the English King, on his purity and equity, his honour and discretion, his single-mindedness and piety, more, perhaps, than on anything else under the sun, hangs the prosperity of this country, hangs the peace of Europe, hangs the progress of the world. Whether we are to advance or recede, whether we are to go on fertilising and civilising the waste places of the earth, whether we are to give to the nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues that own our sway liberty and prosperity and Christianity, or whether our sun is to set and our beneficent Empire is to be broken up and brought to naught, like the empires that have preceded it—this depends, to a very considerable extent, on the rule, the action, the example of one man, and that our King. I question if so much

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ever before turned on the words and works and dispositions of a single person as now depends on the conduct and ideas of King Edward the Seventh. An unwise word, a false step on his part and the foundations may be broken up: Europe may be in a blaze, India may be in revolt, Africa, Canada, Australia may become hostile. Never, therefore, did man so much need a wise and understanding heart, and high principle and devotion to duty and victory over temptation, as does our new Sovereign, the lord of this fair and puissant realm. And where shall we seek, where procure for him this strength and guidance but of God; on what can we rely but on our religion? We should tremble for our future, we should be afraid at every turn, were it not that the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. In Him is our confidence and strength. This is the great message that the Coronation has for *us*; it is a summons to prayer. The whole service is designed to impress and bless both King and people, but especially the former, but for its power it largely depends on our co-operation. Yes, we for whom no place can be found at Westminster, *we* can make the anointing, and the crowning, and the enthroning effective by our earnest and heartfelt prayers. It is true that we shall be present by representation; everything that the Archbishop says and does, it is as our delegate, our spokesman; his is but the voice of

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that mystical body of which we are members. But that must not suffice us. We must have a service of our own; every parish where two or three can be gathered in Christ's name must send up its prayers to the Father of Lights. And to prepare you, in some degree, for that service has been my object in this sermon.

But what if you cannot join therein, or if no such service can be provided where you are on that day? Well, God is everywhere, and He is everywhere and always attentive to our cry. Lift up your hearts, then, for your King and country. Join your supplications to those which shall be offered at Westminster; pray the King of all the earth to consecrate to his office and to endow for the work that lies before him our Sovereign Lord King Edward the Seventh.



A Coronation Sermon

BY THE

REV. G. W. ALLEN

VICAR OF THORNTON STEWARD, YORKSHIRE



Sermon IV

A CORONATION SERMON

I CHRON. XXIX. 28

‘And his son reigned in his stead.’



AFTER a reign of unexampled length, beneficence and prosperity, our late good and virtuous Queen has departed this life and passed into the presence of the King of kings ; and, following an order of things which has lasted since the dawn of civilisation, her son reigns in her stead.

It is one of the glories of our happy Constitution that, though the hereditary rule applies to the succession to the throne, it is with, and not independently of, the will of the people. One of the most important parts of the Coronation Service is that where the Archbishop of Canterbury, as representing the people on the side of their unity in God, solemnly asks whether they approve of the one next in succession as rightful heir to the

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throne, and are willing that he should be anointed king over them.*

Thus the subordination of the people is not that of slaves who have to obey their master whether they will or no, but of free men, who see that the good of all is better assured by an orderly and established government, and willingly consent to obey him who represents it.

Nothing is more important for us in this present world in which we live than to be able to distinguish between what is abstractly desirable and what is actually practicable. Abstractly, the *best* Englishman should be king; but it has never been pretended that any king has been the best Englishman in every sense of the word. St Paul was certainly a better man than the Emperor Nero, but he never

* See *The Coronation Service, with Introduction and Notes* (Skeffington & Son), page 35: "The Queen being so placed, the Archbishop turneth to the east part of the theatre, and after, together with the Lord Chancellor, Lord Great Chamberlain, Lord High Constable and the Earl Marshal (Garter King - of - Arms preceding them), goes to the other three sides of the theatre in this order—south, west, and north, and at every one of the four sides, with a loud voice, speaks to the people; and the Queen in the meantime, standing up by her chair, turns and shows herself unto the people at every of the four sides of the theatre as the Archbishop is at every one of them, and while he speaks thus to the people:—

" 'Sirs, I present unto you Queen Victoria, the undoubted Queen of this realm. Wherefore, all you who are come this day to do your homage, are you willing to do the same?' " In a note it is added: "In this section the will of the People is sought for the Sovereign's coronation."

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made any claim to the Roman throne on this plea. "The best" is a very wide and general expression ; and "the best" from one point of view is often far from being "the best" from another. Practically, he is the best ruler whose right to the position is most widely recognised ; for, however desirable as ruler a man might be in personal gifts and qualifications, if he were not recognised by a sufficiently large majority of the people, the greatest disturbance and interruption to the quiet course of public business would result.

There are only two practicable ways of indicating who is to be king—by popular election or by birth. Many evils attend the former. Does not the whole history of our civil institutions show that, when the prize competed for is very greatly desired, the man of integrity, honesty and virtue stands little chance against the unscrupulous self-pusher, who will promise anything, and resort to any means, to secure the votes of the electorate. It is bad enough in America, where the highest office can only be held for four, or at most for eight, years. If, instead of for a limited term, the election were for life, we can well imagine how much greater would be the excitement, the clash of opposing parties, and the temptation to resort to fraudulent, or even criminal, means. And even if human nature could be so improved as to exclude the use of

unfair methods, the chance of the best man winning would still be remote. For not all agree as to what constitutes "the best." The best for glory abroad might not be the best for wise government at home. The most virtuous and amiable man might not be the strongest and most resolute governor; while a man of parts and learning might not be appreciated by the masses, or be able to hold them in due order and subjection.

None of these evils apply to the hereditary principle. The most that can be urged against it is that there is no real guarantee that the eldest son of the last king will be capable of governing wisely and well. We have had, it is true, unwise kings, the sons of kings. The pedantry and small-mindedness of George III. cost us our American possessions; but though a loss to us, it is by no means certain now that it has been a loss to the world, for it has enabled the English-speaking race to develop a new type which, in spite of some blemishes (and all nations have some), has been a gain to humanity. Besides, such a thing could never occur now, unless the whole people were as mad as the king; and where the whole people go mad, their power to force the hand of the ruler would be far greater with an elected ruler, an individual with no great traditions behind him, than with a king

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who had succeeded to the throne by right of birth.

Let us now look at some of the distinct advantages of the hereditary principle. First, it practically leaves the choice of the future ruler to God, Who, as the Psalmist says, forms us in our mother's womb. But if this should seem to some strained and far-fetched, we can say, secondly, that thus the nation is saved the terrible and dreadful upset of a popular election; compared with which, none that we have experience of resembles at all in the magnitude of the issues at stake. We might then see candidates promising far more than they could ever hope to perform, and using all sorts of unscrupulous means to gain election. The power of money would be employed to secure success; and a candidate, set up by some particular interest, aristocratic, commercial or doctrinaire, might, if elected, throw the whole national administration into a one-sided system, neglecting, to the general loss of the people, other sides equally important. Add to this the dreadful anxiety and the entire dislocation of business which would prevail while so momentous a decision hung in the issue, and we can see what an excessive price we should have to pay for the doubtful gain of electing our ruler by popular vote, instead of

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accepting the one who takes it by right of birth.

But, thirdly, we may urge this also. We know, for science so assures us, that capabilities are to a large extent hereditary. We often see, it is true, a clever father followed by a stupid son, but, taking the whole general tendency of experience, we shall find, more often than not, that what earlier generations did with effort, and badly, later generations do easily and well. The development of the human race has gone on upon these lines since the world began. What is done, at first, only by inflexible resolution and effort firmly persisted in, becomes, in the course of time, a habit, done usually without conscious effort and as a matter of course. And though, as was admitted above, we do see instances of children being less able, rather than better able, than their fathers, we could probably meet every case of this kind with two to the contrary. In spite of particular exceptions, the general law holds that one who is the descendant of a long line of ancestors who have all occupied the same position, or practised the same thing, will be likely to be better qualified to discharge those duties, or to perform that thing, than one to whom the position, or the practice, is entirely new.

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It is not so much by his direct action as by his indirect influence that the King rules. His power is felt by the tone which, in his public and private life, he gives to the social life of the people. He must know how to bear himself in all the multifarious relationships in which he is called upon to act. How not to be too familiar nor too strange; not too strait-laced nor too easy-going; not too quick to encourage experiments in legislation, not too slow in accepting genuine reforms. All this knowledge—so essential to a king—is just that in which heredity is likely to tell; and just that in which a man who has not come of ancestors who have been doing this for generations is likely—however good and excellent he may be personally—to go wrong. As for direct government, the making of laws and the maintaining of public order, all this is now done by Parliament; but they are mistaken who think that—because this is so—nothing remains for the King to do in these directions. Though he does not determine, he can influence; though he does not initiate, he can do much to support or oppose. His great strength in this direction lies in the fact that he stands above and aloof from the two, or more, parties into which his Parliament is divided. He owes his high position

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to neither party, therefore his opinion has weight with both, and he is regarded as representing the general interests of the nation as a whole.

A popularly - elected ruler, on the contrary, however much he may desire—the moment he is elected—to be entirely beyond party consideration, yet finds it very difficult to really be so. And this for two reasons. First, he owes his success to the efforts of his party, and they naturally look to him to favour them. Secondly, because it is only at the moment of election that he ceases to be a member of the party he has belonged to; and the influence of years of partisan life cannot be thrown off in a moment. Whereas, the hereditary king, guided by the great traditions of his past, stands entirely aloof from party politics, so that through him the two great parties attain a practical unity, and work, as now one, now the other, come into power, the stability and the progress of the nation.

Therefore we hold that there is real power in the idea of a king, the son of a king, and the descendant of kings. We claim that great family traditions are more likely than not to steer a ruler safely through the varied and onerous functions he has to perform, and that such a ruler is more likely, than one quite new to the office, to know (in the quaint language

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of Scripture) how to go out and come in before his people.

And the solemn service of Coronation; the recognition by the people; the Holy Communion; the oath; the anointing with oil; the splendid symbolism of the two swords, of Justice and of Mercy; of the orb, the sceptre and the robe; and, finally, the placing of the crown upon his head, and the presenting of the Bible—surely these are not mere antiquarian curiosities. A king who discerns the meaning of these things and resolves to act up to it, will rule his people wisely and well. He will recognise that he is ruler, not by his own power or personal merit, but (as the very wording of his title reminds him) *by the Grace of God*, Who created him a king's son, and so brought him to the throne. He will remember how closely, in the Epistles and the Apocalypse, the titles of "King" and "Priest" are joined together; and that by his anointing is symbolised the consecration of himself to God. The cross upon the orb that represents his dominion will remind him that though he is King of his people he himself is under the power of the King of kings, Who rules in the kingdom of men, and sets up and puts down whom He will. By his oath, by which he pledges himself to observe the Con-

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stitution and to maintain true religion, he recognises that he has obligations as well as privileges, and needs the help of a Power greater than his own to enable him to fulfil them.

And the Bible is, and will ever remain, the pledge of religious liberty. When, at the death of Mary, Queen Elizabeth entered the City of London, she was met by a deputation of the citizens, who requested her, with the release of persons imprisoned for heresy, to release also four notable prisoners—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; in other words, to give back the Bible to the people. They presented her with a Bible, which she kissed, and promised to read diligently therein. The very best safeguard against political tyranny is religious liberty. A tyrant must be absolute; that is, he must make his people believe that there is no power greater than his own. Wherever the people have access to the Scriptures they learn that the powers that be are ordained by God, and are responsible to God, and that no laws are binding if they contradict the laws of God.

Thus the King, by accepting the Bible, recognises a law higher than his own, and a power greater than himself. The Bible teaches plainly the true equality of all men before God, while

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yet it recognises, equally plainly, diversities of operations, gifts and stations, which, when rightly exercised and conscientiously fulfilled, are all equally honourable. Thus equality, which, if falsely understood, would mean a levelling down, finds its true meaning, and becomes a unity in which every variety of difference is harmonised to the promotion of the general good.

Thus, in our happy state, the liberties of the people are secured by this solemn function of the coronation, whereby the King undertakes to govern constitutionally, and the people promise, so long as he does this, to submit to and obey him.

Our present King is no stranger to us. He is the son of kings who have ruled us, and the father of the kings who shall rule. During the many years of his public life as Prince of Wales he has shown a ready interest in all works of charity and benevolence, and we can be well assured that he will rightly appreciate and faithfully fulfil the higher duties he is now called upon to exercise. He now ascends an undisputed throne, approved and acclaimed by all the people. And as we pray day by day and week by week that he may be "Endued with God's Holy Spirit, enriched with His heavenly Grace, and granted in health and wealth long to live,"

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we can wish no higher blessing for him than that he may unite in himself all that has been best in his illustrious ancestors, and hand them down unsullied and increased to his successors.





King of Kings

BY THE

REV. C. J. RIDGEWAY, M.A.

VICAR OF CHRIST CHURCH, LANCASTER GATE, W., AND
PREBENDARY OF ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL.



Sermon V

KING OF KINGS

PSALM LXXII. 11

"All kings shall bow down before Him, all nations shall do Him service."



THE Church of Christ has a divine and varied mission entrusted to it. Like all God-made things, it was made for an end and has a special work to do.

What is its mission?

Not only to proclaim the truth as it is in Jesus, not only to teach His most Holy Faith, not only to baptize with the thrice holy Name, not only to build up and help men to live godly, righteous and sober lives, but there is another most important function given to it to carry out.

It is to be the witness of God in the world, to throw the halo of the heavenly around the earthly, to take hold of the things of time and sense, and redeem and consecrate them to the service of God.

And the Church of Christ in this land does not

neglect its mission. There are many ways in which it seeks to fulfil it.

At the birth of a child the State requires it to be registered and enrolled as a citizen of the kingdom, a subject of the sovereign, and the parents are, so to speak, its sponsors, whose work it is to bring up the child to be a loyal and obedient citizen. But the Church in Holy Baptism claims each child for God, enrolls it as "an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven," and appoints god-parents, whose duty it is to see that the child is taught "all things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health."

The State upholds marriage as a civil contract. It sees that all is legally performed and punishes those who break the marriage laws. But it is the Church that teaches men that marriage is a holy estate instituted of God, and bids bridegroom and bride come to church to be married, that God's Grace may be given to them and His blessing may be invoked on their wedded life.

It is the care of the State to provide burying-grounds and to see that all the sanitary arrangements are attended to for the well-being of the living. But the Church consecrates the churchyard or cemetery, and with a hope-giving service lays the bodies of its children in their last earthly resting-place.

The State makes its legislators pledge them-

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selves to loyalty to Sovereign and country ere they enter upon their duties in Upper or Lower House; but it is the Church that, on the day when Parliament is opened, and on every day of work, prays that those assembled may be endowed with wisdom from on high.

Thus the Church asserts its province and mission. Thus it claims everything for God, puts the mark of God on all, and witnesses clearly and forcibly to the claims and authority of God.

Men, indeed, talk sometimes disparagingly of the Church as an institution unnecessary if not undesirable.

But is it really so? Are they right? Do away with the Church and its mission and what a void is created. The child is registered in the registers of the land; the marriage is performed in the Registry Office; the body is put in the law-secured grave; legislators meet to make or mar laws. But the witness to God is silenced; there is no reminder of higher claims, all is of the earth earthy. There is nothing to tell men it is not the whole of life to live nor the whole of death to die; nothing to check the down-dragging influence of material things. And who will venture to say that a nation will be more righteous, more happy or better, if the light of the divine is extinguished, the witness to God dumb, the reminder of the true value of life wanting?

And are we not, as citizens of a great Empire, being reminded of another striking instance of the mission of the Church for good, of the way in which it sanctifies things earthly and brings God into daily life? Our thoughts are full of the coronation of our King, to which we have been looking forward for many months, and in which we desire to take an intelligent part as loyal subjects, though some of us may be far away from the actual scene and can only read of it in the daily papers. The State makes much of this act of Coronation, and in so doing wisely follows the precedent of men and lands in the far-distant ages of the world's history, as well as in the history of our own land. We are taught to regard it as an important feature in the entrance of a new sovereign into his royal inheritance. All that earthly pomp and magnificence can contrive is done in honour of the crowned one and to add to the dignity of the mighty office. But it is the Church which takes the earthly and lifts it up to heaven, which brings the thought of God into what is done, and gives him his rightful place as King of kings and Lord of lords, which orders and adds the striking ceremonial of worship to Him by Whom kings reign and princes decree justice.

This Service is an important feature, nay may we not say the central feature of the act of coronation on which all thoughts are concentrated at the present

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time, and we cannot enter into the spirit of that great historical event, or be in sympathy with our King and Queen in the solemn ceremony in which they are the chief actors, unless we have an intelligent grasp of the Service itself, its nature and its meaning. To do this we need to realise that the coronation is not merely a magnificent exhibition of royal pomp, not merely a splendid sight, but, more than all, a religious Service, a great act of worship on the part of Sovereign and people in which "Kings fall down before Him and nations do Him service."

It is a Service which calls for our careful study all the more because it is new to us. It is, indeed, old, very old, for it comes to us with the mark of ages upon it. The place and main features have been the same since William I. was crowned in the Abbey which St Edward the Confessor, himself crowned at Winchester, built; and a full account, doubtless by an eyewitness, of the coronation of Richard I. in Westminster Abbey shows us how little the service has been altered since these far-off days. True, the service was at that time said in Latin, and the English language was not used until the coronation of James I., but we have only to compare the service with that proposed to be used on June 26th to see how, with a few minor details, it has, during all these centuries, remained essentially

the same. Hence it is a service that demands special study, for it has retained the rites and ceremonies of olden days to a degree that does not hold good in any other service of the Church of England, and probably, from being so seldom used, it has escaped the pruning-knife of Reformation times and has come down to us practically unchanged.

To some, indeed, its ritual may seem elaborate and excessive, but when we give it the attention it deserves we shall, I doubt not, find that, rightly understood, it is rich in meaning and eloquent in teaching.

The limits of a sermon make it possible only to dwell on some of its more leading features, but they will be sufficient if they help us to enter into the spirit of this ancient ceremony and remind us that the religious Service is the central point of the proceedings which engross the thoughts and interests of the subjects of the British Empire all over the world.

There are eight distinct acts which stand out with a special prominence among the many rites and ceremonies of the coronation. What are they? What do they mean?

I. The Recognition of the Sovereign by the People. The procession has passed along the nave of the Abbey, through the choir, and up the steps to the

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"theatre," or raised dais, which has been erected between the choir and the sanctuary. Then the Sovereign, having knelt down and prayed, is seated not in the throne which has been placed there but in a chair before and below the throne. When he has taken his seat, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who is all through the chief officiant, together with the Lord Chancellor and certain other officials of the State, goes in order to the four sides of the platform, and from each, with a loud voice, speaks to the people, the King in the meantime standing up by his chair and turning and showing himself unto the people at every one of the four sides:—

"Sirs, I here present unto you King Edward, the undoubted King of this realm. Wherefore all you who are come this day to do your homage, are you willing to do the same?"

And the people answer with one voice, "God save King Edward!" while the trumpets sound.

II. The Oblation. Twice this takes place in the service, the first time when, immediately after the Recognition, the Sovereign leaves the dais and goes to the altar, where, kneeling upon the steps, he offers a pall or altar cloth of gold, and an ingot or wedge of gold, which are reverently laid upon the altar by the Archbishop, and the second time when, in the Communion Service immediately after the anointing, the Sovereign carries the Sword of State

sheathed to the altar and delivers it to the Archbishop, who lays it on the altar.

III. The Oath. Immediately after the Nicene Creed the King takes the Oath, in the sight of all the people, to maintain the rights and liberties of Church and State, laying his right hand upon the Holy Gospel in the great Bible which had been carried in the procession and is now brought from the altar by the Archbishop to the King as he kneels upon the steps, after which he kisses the book and signs the Oath.

IV. The Anointing. After the Oath the King, disrobed of his crimson robe, takes his seat in King Edward's chair (made in 1300 by order of Edward I., and so used from the time of Edward II.), which is placed in the midst of the area over against the altar, and there he is anointed by the Archbishop on the head, breast * and hands, after which the Archbishop says the Blessing over him as he kneels.

V. The Investiture. The King is invested with (1) the Royal Robe, (2) the Orb, (3) the Ring engraven with a St George's cross, (4) the Sceptre, (5) the Rod surmounted with a dove.

VI. The Putting on of the Crown and presenting the Holy Bible. The Crown, still called "King Edward's crown," for the jewels in it are the ancient ones though the gold setting is new, is brought

* This was omitted at the last Coronation.

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from the altar on which it has been laid, and placed by the Archbishop on the King's head, who is still sitting in King Edward's chair. After which the Holy Bible which was carried in procession is presented to the King. This part of the ceremony is said to date from the coronation of William and Mary.

VII. The Benediction. The King, having been thus anointed and crowned, and having received all the ensigns of royalty, the Archbishop solemnly blesses him, while bishops and peers say "Amen" at the end of each of the five parts of the Blessing.

VIII. The Enthronisation. After the *Te Deum* has been sung the King is lifted up in his throne, which is placed between the choir and the sanctuary, and all the peers do their homage. First the Archbishop with the rest of the bishops about him kneel down before him and swear to be faithful and true, after which the other peers, according to their order and rank, do their homage in like manner, putting off their coronets.

IX. The Communion. The Communion Service is then proceeded with. The King, when the Archbishop has read the two sentences appointed, descends from his throne, and going to the steps of the altar takes off his crown and kneels down to make his offerings—bread and wine for the Communion, and a purse of gold. He then goes to his chair on the south side of the altar until

the time of reception, when he advances to the Altar, and, kneeling down, the Archbishop administers the Bread and the Dean of Westminster the Cup, after which he puts on his crown, and taking his sceptre in his hand returns to the throne.

How full of teaching this service is. Every act is rich in meaning, conveying to eye and ear a striking lesson, which we can read by ourselves without need of interpreter.

The Recognition proclaims the rights of the nation. The King is one who is not thrust upon an unwilling people, but whose rightful claim is acknowledged. His subjects are invited to declare their approval and to proclaim their readiness to accept him as their King by loud and repeated acclamations of "God save the King!" Before he is crowned he is accepted by the people.

The oblations offered by the King have a special significance, for they are presented in humble acknowledgment of the sovereignty of Him by Whom kings rule.

The Oath is the solemn obligation of the King to be true, by the help of God, to his high office; while in the Anointing there is the emblem of that divine anointing which has been invoked in the *Veni, Creator Spiritus*, and by virtue of which the King becomes "the Lord's Anointed."

Each act of investing has its special significance.

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The Royal Robe tells of one who is not only the King of men but the "Minister of God," "His chosen servant" admitted to a divine office. The Orb with the cross tells that the whole world is subject to the power and empire of Christ our Redeemer. The King is reminded by the Archbishop that the Ring engraven with the St George's cross is at once "the ensign of kingly dignity and of defence of the Catholic Faith." The Sceptre is the emblem of justice, the Rod, surmounted with a dove, of mercy, while the Crowning and Enthroning speak for themselves of the dignity of the office. The whole service fitly closes with the act of Communion, when the newly-crowned King lays aside his crown, and humbly kneeling before God's Altar partakes of the sacred feast and supplicates His sustaining Grace, without which none, whether ruler or ruled, can please God or discharge the duties which have been entrusted to him.

What then, in conclusion, are the thoughts which this service is intended to emphasise?

Surely we cannot study it without being reminded on the one side of the sacredness of the office of the King and the solemnity of his responsibility, on the other hand of the call to us as a people to true loyalty, praying always that both King and people may be enabled, by God's help, to fulfil their mutual obligations, that the King,

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“knowing Whose minister he is, may above all things seek God’s honour and glory, and that we and all his subjects, duly considering Whose authority he hath, may faithfully serve, honour and humbly obey him.”

So will the Coronation Service be to us not only a grand display of earthly glory—alas, how easily and in a moment that is dimmed sad experience has taught us—but a solemn and intelligent recognition of the mutual obligations of king and people in the presence of the King of kings, “before whom kings must ever bow down and to whom all nations must do service.”

N.B.—On the occasion of the Coronation of William IV., the Coronation of Queen Adelaide followed immediately after the Coronation of the King. She was anointed, was presented with a Ring, and a Crown was placed on her head. She received a Sceptre and Rod, and was placed in her Throne. She too partook of the Holy Communion. The only memorable omission in her case was that of the Oath. It is not, however, yet known whether this use will be followed at the Coronation of Queen Alexandra.



From Above

BY THE

REV. S. BARING-GOULD

RECTOR OF LEW TRENCHARD, NORTH DEVON



Sermon VI

FROM ABOVE

ROM. XIII. I

"The powers that be are ordained by God."

IN the year 44 before Christ Julius Cæsar was in Rome. He had overcome all public enemies, and the whole power over the republic and the conquered nations was in his hands. He had, in fact, the royal power, but not the kingly name. On the 14th February in that year, at a great public ceremony, a friend offered to him the royal diadem; but Cæsar, seeing that this was received with disfavour by the people, put it aside with his hand, and refused to place it about his temples.

However, the fact that it had been offered him roused such anger in the breasts of some of the nobles that they assassinated him on the following 15th of March, exactly a month after the ill-fated offer had been made.

Although the Roman emperors after that wielded despotic power they did not venture to assume the crown till Diocletian, some three hundred and thirty years later, and that not in Rome but in the East.

Now the crown offered to Julius Cæsar was not at all like the royal diadem as we understand it. It was not composed of metal; it was a simple band of wool or silk fastened round the head and tied in a knot behind. The Romans had real crowns, which they decreed to successful generals and admirals, and Cæsar had a right to wear these; but these were decreed by the people to those who were to carry them, and had no other significance than that of being a token of honour granted by popular vote. They carried no obligations with them, they implied no divine recognition.

But it was quite other with the simple white woollen fillet. That was worn by priests, and was a token that they were invested from on high with the sacerdotal office. And so the people of Rome were jealous of the emperor assuming it, because it signified that he claimed to rule by divine sanction, that he was invested with his office by God. They did not object to being ruled like slaves by an infamous tyrant, who shed the blood of the best and wisest like

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water, so long as they could represent to themselves that he was elected by them, but they would not endure to regard him as the minister of God.

Now, when St Paul used the words I have taken as my text he laid down this very distasteful doctrine. Whether invested with the outward symbol of sovereignty or not, king and emperor reigned by His commission and will.

"By Me," said God, "kings reign." And the ceremony of Coronation is a recognition among Christian nations that it is so.

No sooner did the peoples of the East and West become Christians than they readily had their kings crowned and anointed, in token that they received a commission from God, and that they were ministers of God to rule in righteousness, and were responsible to Him for the trust committed to their charge.

Now there is no such a thing as divine right whereby a Prince of Wales becomes King over the English people on the decease of the reigning king or queen. He becomes so by the will and the consent of the people. In Edward VII. the English Empire recognises the fitness of the son of our dear late Queen to be the head over Great Britain and her Colonies. But that is not all; by the ceremony of the Coronation and Anointing he is invested with divine commission and recognition, as a king by the grace of

God over a Christian people. He becomes not only the chief official representative of the Empire, but also the minister of God in the State.

This is in accordance with God's ordinance in the Church. As Jesus Christ took man's nature upon Him, and is at once God and Man, so in all things in His Church the divine and the human are intimately united, the visible with the invisible, the material and the spiritual. It is so with respect to the ministry in sacred things. In the Church "no man taketh this office on himself." He cannot become a minister in the Church without the consent of the people of God. Any man feeling in himself the call of God to serve in the sacred ministry of the Church must have what is called his *Si quis* read in the parish church where he resides. And it runs in this form: "Notice is hereby given that A. B., now resident in this parish, intends to offer himself a candidate for the holy office of a deacon (or a priest, as the case may be) at the ensuing ordination of the Lord Bishop of this diocese; and if any person know any just cause or impediment for which he ought not to be admitted into Holy Orders (or into the holy order of priests, as the case may be) he is now to declare the same, or to signify the same forthwith to the Bishop." If no objection be raised, then it is held that the congregation accept the offer of the candidate for the ministry.

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But that is by no means all. Among the sects this is practically sufficient. The call of the congregation constitutes the minister. He does, in fact, become thereby the minister to the congregation, and he derives his authority and his mission from the people.

But it is not so in the Church. There indeed, as we have seen, the consent of the people is required, but that leads up to the ordination by the Bishop, as the divinely-appointed minister of God to commission and invest with authority from God those whom the congregation present before him.

By Ordination, the laying on of hands by the authorised minister of God, the successor in the apostolic office, the candidate becomes a minister of God.

Grace is conferred to execute his functions, and so he becomes the minister of the congregation and the minister of God to them. It is much the same thing with regard to the kingly office. The people consent to, and accept, the candidate for the crown, but he receives divine commission and authority by unction and coronation by the Archbishop.

In Christ's Church the conferring of grace is bound up with outward signs. There is an outward and visible sign in the conferring of grace in Ordination. There is an outward and visible sign in the conferring of grace in Baptism. There is an outward and

visible sign in the giving of strengthening grace in Confirmation. There is an outward and visible sign in the bestowal of grace in Matrimony. So also in the great Sacrament, which is the centre and sun of the whole Christian system, that of the altar, bread and wine are the outward and visible signs of the body and blood of Christ, offered before the Eternal Father in commemoration of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and distributed to sow in the faithful the seeds of the resurrection and of eternal life.

The whole Catholic Church is an outward and visible community holding the One Faith, ministered to by the same divinely-commissioned officers, united to God and to one another by the same divinely-appointed sacraments.

But it is as well a spiritual kingdom, governed by its one Head, Jesus Christ, and it is His authority which is exercised by His officers therein; it is He who ordains through the bishops, His chosen vehicles for conferring grace and commission; it is His grace which streams to every member through the sacramental channels.

Now there are two kingdoms, that which is political—the State, and that which is spiritual—the Church. As we have seen, Christ reigns as supreme Head in the Church. That is especially His kingdom in this world, but He leaves to men to work out their political ideals, whether monarchical or re-

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publican, in their own way. Nevertheless, a Christian commonwealth should always recognise that He is the head over all in every department of human life ; and a State from which God is banished, or is not acknowledged, must expect that from it, as a State, He will withdraw His guidance and protecting hand.

Neither in the State nor in the family can we do without God ; He binds all associations of men together for their good, and to reject Him is to reject the One who holds the issues of life and death, not only of the individual man but of all societies and nations, all congeries of men. We may indeed be thankful that in England we recognise this truth, and the coronation of our King, as a most solemn and sacred act, is a national recognition of God as the source of our strength and the binder together into one of all parts of our commonwealth ; and we cannot doubt that as He is thus nationally acknowledged so will He acknowledge, bless and protect us. " Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in Heaven." These words, it is true, apply primarily to individuals, but they may be applied to nations as well. A God-fearing, God-confessing nation will have God on its side ; He will stand by it and maintain it. Of that we can be in no doubt.

And now, finally, the seer in Revelation beheld in heaven the four-and-twenty elders casting down their

crowns before the Throne of God. These crowns were not royal diadems, but the bands about the heads symbolising their sacred priesthood; and the vision represents the Ministry of Christ's Church at the end surrendering the episcopal and priestly offices into the hands of Him who reclaims all offices given in His Church whilst militant here on earth. But Christ is also represented as having on His head many crowns. In the words of a favourite hymn we say,—

“Crown Him with many crowns,
The Lamb upon His Throne !
Crown Him the Virgin's Son !
The God incarnate born !
Crown Him the Lord of Peace !
Whose power a sceptre sways
In heaven and earth—that wars may cease
And all be prayer and praise.”

For at the end all the kings of the earth will surrender their crowns to Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords, and He shall reign for ever and ever, the One Head in the One Kingdom at once spiritual and human, the Church and the State fused into one great Society of the Blessed, in the new heavens and the new earth, in which He will be supreme.



The Pure Crown

BY THE

REV. H. J. WILMOT BUXTON, M.A.

VICAR OF ST GILES-IN-THE-WOOD, NORTH DEVON



Sermon VII

THE PURE CROWN

PSALM XXI. 3

“Thou settest a crown of pure gold upon his head.”

THE crowning of a king in any country and in any age has been an event of great and solemn importance. It marks the turning-point in the history of a nation, the beginning of a new period of better or worse things. In thinking to-day of the coronation of King Edward VII. we remember that more than three centuries have passed since the last Edward occupied the English throne. Of those dead-and-gone Edwards some are remembered for their chivalrous courage, some for their great weakness, one, at least, for his gentle piety; his memory is kept green by the many schools and charitable institutions which his brief life gave him time to endow. Our prayer to-day is that the chivalrous courage and the pious example may be combined in the person of our present King. We must remember, also, that although the accession of

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the King to the throne is a political event, his coronation is a most solemn act of religion. As in the old days Saul and David and many another were anointed and crowned by God's priest, so to-day the solemn acts are performed, consecrating the King to God's service, and showing that by God kings reign and that it is by divine grace that King Edward occupies his present position. The twenty-first Psalm tells us also of the crowning of a king—"The King shall joy in Thy strength, O Lord, and in Thy salvation how greatly shall He rejoice." This King is another King, even Jesus, He Who was called the Man of Sorrows, but Who is also the King of the Jews, the King of angels and of mankind, the King of Glory. To Him came joy in the morning of Easter, after the sorrow of Good Friday, when He rose from the tomb and rejoiced as a giant to run His course. "Thou settest a crown of pure gold upon his head." The only visible crown which Jesus wore on earth was one of thorns, yet He was in one sense crowned many times. At His Incarnation He was crowned with our flesh, by the Jews He was crowned with thorns, by His faithful people He was crowned with a crown of righteousness, at His Ascension He was crowned by God, His Father, with a crown of glory. "Thou has given him his heart's desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips." What was the heart's desire of Jesus? Even the

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salvation of mankind. He exchanged the glories of heaven for the sorrows of earth, the throne for the cross, the song of angels for the blasphemy of foes, because His heart's desire was for the souls of men. He came to be a King, and the wicked crowned Him with thorns, and enthroned Him on the Cross, and gave him a reed for a sceptre. Yet for all that He was a King, He was crowned with the love and gratitude of His people, He had prayed that where He was His servants might be, and the request of His lips was not withheld; "He saw of the travail of His soul and was satisfied." Men on earth saw no other crown on the brow of Jesus but that of thorns which the soldiers platted, but in heaven, St John tells us, that on His head are many crowns. Those who look on the coronation of the King of England will only see one crown upon his head, yet in another sense he will wear many others, even as Jesus, his Master, does. Jesus wears the crown of *love*, the love which made Him come down from heaven for us men and for our salvation. The love which made Him content to be betrayed and given up into the hands of wicked men, and made Him hold the little children in His arms, which made Him dry the widow's tears and comfort the broken, contrite heart of the Magdalene. Yes, and that crown is composed also of the love of His people. The grand cathedral service, with its pealing anthems and echoing psalms,

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the evening hymn lisped by baby lips, the cottager's simple prayer, all these come from the love of His people and make a crown for Jesus. Surely one of the crowns which the King of England wears will be the crown of his people's love. "Thou settest a crown of *pure* gold upon his head." Some crowns have been gained by fraud, by violence, by usurpation; they have been stained by the blood of brave men and of murdered innocents, but the crown which our King wears is *pure*, unstained by blood, unsullied by crime. No widows need make lamentation, no fatherless children need mourn because of it. It is a crown rightly and justly assumed, and it is adorned with the love of the British nation. It is of *pure* gold. There is no true Briton at home or abroad who will say a word against the coronation of our King. The love of his dead parents, the love of wife and children, the love of the great ones in the realm, the love of loyal soldiers and sailors, the love of little suffering children in the hospitals, and the love of little happy children in the schools, all combine to make a crown of pure gold, a beautiful crown. From palace and cottage, from stately minster and simple village church alike the prayer goes up—God save the King.

Yes, King Edward is crowned as by his people's love. One of the many crowns of Jesus is the *crown of righteousness*. He Who knows no sin,

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yet suffered for the sins of others, is crowned with a diadem of perfect righteousness. For the King, as for any mortal man, this is at present impossible. The King, like other men, is a frail mortal, liable to sin or fall into temptation. There is a saying that the King can do no wrong, but when we remember the examples of Jeroboam and Ahab in Jewry, and of John and Henry VIII. in our own land, we cannot accept the saying as true. Yet it should be true of England's King as of his Master—"a king shall reign in righteousness." The example which comes from the highest place in the realm should be one of good to the lowest place. It was written of Queen Victoria, "Her court was pure." A pure example from the throne is the very best influence which can leaven Society of every kind. "Thou settest a crown of *pure* gold upon his head." One of the crowns of Jesus is a crown of *victory*, a crown of many victories. These victories were not gained on blood-stained fields amid the headlong rush of battle. They were not gained over earthly foes, or for the sake of wealth and conquest. They were gained not by the blood of others, but by that of the Conqueror Himself; the battlefields were those of humility, of patience, of suffering and pain. They were gained by the lowly birth at Bethlehem, by the obscure life and labour of Nazareth, by the fasting and temptation,

the loneliness and the sorrow of Gethsemane, by the wounds and agony of the Cross of Calvary. And the victories were final. Sin and death were conquered once for all; death hath no more dominion over us. And the crown which the King of England wears is a crown of victory. Some of the brightest jewels which adorn the diadem of England are memories of the triumphs won by English arms in times gone by—triumphs which have planted the British flag on nearly every soil and made us masters of nearly all the world. The crown of England is studded with memories of victory; it sparkles with illustrious names—such names as Cressy and Agincourt, Blenheim and Ramilies, Corunna and Trafalgar, Waterloo and Inkerman. There were some kings in old France who were called, from their idleness and sloth, the sluggard kings, but the crown of England is no sluggard's crown. It shines with splendid memories, not only of victories gained in war but won in peace, which gave us our colonies and enlarged our commerce, and carried the English tongue to the very limits of the world. But surely there is another sense in which our King wears a crown of victory. Glorious as are these jewels of a splendid past, these are not the greatest and the best; the king who can rule himself is the noblest king, he who can conquer himself is the greatest con-

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queror. The crown is not for every one who runs the race, but for him who perseveres to the end, and the victory is not to the fighter only, but to him who gains the victory. Then, again, among the many crowns on the head of Jesus we remember the *crown of thorns*. That crown of mockery and insult was yet very precious as being the token of the infinite love and gentleness of the Son of God. We rejoice in our Saviour's crown of glory, but we never forget the crown of thorns or those sorrows which brought us joy everlasting. The soldier who gains many victories and wins many honours never forgets the scars of the wounds which he received in battle; they are more precious than all the medals and orders which sparkle on his breast. So we must believe the glorified scars of the thorn crown and the nails are very precious in the sight of Jesus.

For England's King there is a crown of thorns, and for all his people also. The cross and the thorn crown are given to us all. In our earliest days we are signed on the brow with the sign of the cross, to show whose we are and whom we serve, and very soon the marks of the thorns are there too. For King Edward on the throne, as for the poorest peasant in his realm, there are sorrows, losses, trials, sufferings. God crowns all His people with a crown of thorns. And that crown is very precious,

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for it reminds us that as we suffer with Jesus we shall also reign with Him. They tell us that Godfrey of Bouillon, the first Christian King of Jerusalem, refused to wear a crown of gold in the city where his Master wore a crown of thorns ; they tell us, too, that Henry, Duke of Lancaster, being offered his choice of many precious things by the French King, selected a thorn from the Saviour's crown, esteeming it greater riches than all the treasures of France. Oh, the crown of thorns is the most precious crown of all. And now, what of ourselves? Can we take any part in the crowning of Jesus? Most surely. When we give ourselves to Him we add fresh splendour to His crown. Every penitent tear shed over our own weakness and our sin shines like a precious jewel in the pure crown of Jesus. Every conquest over self gives a new glory to the Saviour's crown of victory ; every gentle act of tenderness and mercy enriches His crown of love. And have we no part in the King's coronation? Only the few are privileged to take part in that solemn right, but the poorest of us can help to crown Him. It is written in the Prophets, "Take silver and gold and make crowns." Let us take of the gold of our love and the seven-times-tried silver of our loyal service and make crowns for England's King, so that he may know himself crowned with the loyal love of his people, throned in the great heart of the great nation, safe

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in the hands of a brave people. Thus can we, even the humblest of us, set a crown of pure gold upon his head. The people of England have been taught,—

“To reverence the king as if he were
Their conscience, and their conscience as their king,
To break the heathen, and uphold the Christ,
To ride about redressing human wrongs,
To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it.”

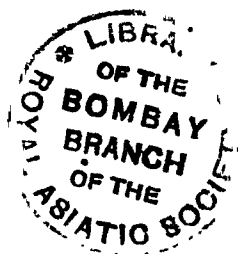
It is such a crown of love and reverence and loyalty that we offer to our King to-day, praying that he may wear it as a worthy occupant of a glorious throne till the time when he must exchange an earthly diadem for a crown of glory that fadeth not away.



The Coronation Service

INTERPRETED TO CHILDREN

BY THE
REV. CANON HAMMOND, LL.B.
VICAR OF ST AUSTELL



66911

Sermon VIII

THE CORONATION SERVICE INTERPRETED TO CHILDREN

EXOD. XII. 26

“What mean ye by this service?”

I NEED not ask you, my dear children, whether you would like to see King Edward crowned—he is to be crowned, as you know, in Westminster Abbey. Of course you would like it! Why, you would give almost anything you have to be there. But that is quite impossible; there will be no room for boys or girls, except for those of the Royal Family. No, *we* could not be admitted, whatever we might be able or willing to pay.

But as you cannot be there, perhaps you would like me to tell you something about it—what will be done on that day, what the service will be like. Then you can be present in thought; then you can picture to yourselves the scene. And I think you ought to know what will be done, and the

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meaning of what is done, because it is your King that is to be crowned. You are his subjects, and it may make, it must make, a great difference to you in later life what sort of king he is. And one purpose of the Coronation is to make him GOD's king and a good king, and so far those who are not present can help in the service. Yes, you can have your part, though absent, in the Coronation ; you can assist the Archbishop and the great lords who will be there, and I hope, before I have done, to have shown you how. And that is more, much more, than merely being present and seeing all the pomp and the show.

And now, attention ! Let us fancy ourselves at Westminster. King Edward in his gorgeous chariot is passing through the streets. They are lined with soldiers ; they are crowded with spectators ; every inch of ground is occupied. At every window you see a cluster of eager faces, and some are looking down from the housetops. And as the King passes he is met at every point with deafening cheers ; you would yourselves, I am sure, shout with the loudest if you were there. But whither is he going ? He is going *to the house of God*—to the same old minster church where so many of our kings for centuries past have been crowned, and where so many of our greatest dead lie buried. He is going to receive the homage of

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his subjects there: he is also going to do homage himself to the Almighty. They will kneel before their King: he and they will kneel before the King of kings, to seek His grace and blessing. And so he descends from his carriage of State; he alights at the great west door of the Abbey and passes into the building. And who are these that meet him there, in their long and stately robes reaching down to their feet, at the threshold of the sanctuary? They are the bishops, the chief pastors of the Church. First and foremost amongst them stands the aged minister of God, the venerable Archbishop of Canterbury. So you see the King comes to receive his crown *from God*, by Whom alone kings reign—from God through the hands of His servant and ambassador, the Archbishop. And now the organ peals and the sweet choir sings, and what music it is! Ah, we shall not hear their music or their words, but we can join in those words all the same. For this will be the opening ANTHEM: "I was glad when they said unto me, we will go into the house of the Lord." And how appropriate they are to a Coronation—they might have been written for one! I should think every Christian is glad that the King goes to church to be crowned; we do not want a king who forgets God, or does not seek God's grace; we could have no confidence in him. And the

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other words of that anthem, "O pray for the peace of Jerusalem! Peace be within thy walls," etc., they are equally suitable. But see! the King, preceded and followed by the high dignitaries of Church and State, and supported by kings and princes, passes up the nave and passes through the choir or chancel; he ascends a platform which has been placed in the choir; every eye in the church is fastened upon him. (This platform, or "theatre," as it is called, reminds us of the brazen scaffold on which King Solomon stood at the dedication of the Temple.) There King Edward kneels down for a few moments—as I hope you do when you come to church—he kneels in private prayer. What a moment is that in his life! Who that sees him kneeling there would not send up a prayer to Heaven in his behalf. And that, again, those who are *not* present can do. Then he sits down, but not in his throne. (he is not yet our anointed King), but in a chair below the throne, sits for a few moments.

And now we hear the voice of the Archbishop; he is asking the people whether they will acknowledge King Edward for their King, for the "anointed of God" should be the chosen and approved of men. Accompanied by the Lord Chancellor and others he goes to every side of the platform in turn, and at each, whilst the King stands, and turns, and

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shows himself to the people, he says these words : "Sirs, I present unto you King Edward, the undoubted King of this realm. Wherefore, all you who are come this day to do your homage, are you willing to do the same?" This is called the RECOGNITION, and it reminds us of Samuel showing Saul, and of the high priest, Jehoiada, showing the little King Joash, the boy of six years old, to the soldiers in the Temple court, and in each case for a like purpose. And just as then the people "clapped their hands and said 'God save the King!'" so now "all with one voice cry out, 'God save King Edward!'" and then "the trumpeters sound," just as they did in the old Bible days. And what next? I ask you to notice that the next thing the King does is to *make an OBLATION* or offering to God. He goes down from the platform to the altar, and there, kneeling on the steps, hands to the Archbishop a pall or altar-cloth of gold and an ingot or wedge of gold of a pound weight. And what does that teach us? Why, that we ought never to come before God empty; that we must always bring an offering when we come into His house; that is why we have the offertory in our churches every Sunday. And see, the pall and the wedge of gold are both presented unto God; they are "reverently laid upon the altar," just as our alms are, and the Archbishop

* 1 Kings i. 39; 2 Kings xi. 14.

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prays God graciously to receive these oblations, just as your own vicar does when he presents your offerings. But this Oblation teaches something more, namely, that the King is God's subject ; this is his tribute to the Most High. And the next thing is—the LITANY is said ; it is read by two bishops together. But why, you may ask, do they have the Litany at a Coronation? for that speaks of our sins and sorrows and cares and necessities. Yes, and that is why they say it now ; it is to put the King and his great lords and his ladies in their proper place as sinners in the sight of God. Before the King is crowned he must cry for mercy like the humblest of his subjects ; he must abase himself before the King of Heaven and ask His forgiveness. And how touching, too, it is to remember that even the Coronation must wait until the monarch and his nobles have first prayed God to bless the sick and the suffering, the widow and the fatherless, and all who are desolate and oppressed ; even on this festival day we may not forget *them*. And then, the Litany ended, the COMMUNION SERVICE, the sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood, the most solemn and most blessed worship than we can offer, begins. You must always remember, hereafter, that your King was not only sworn and anointed and crowned and acclaimed in the house of God and by the minister of God, but in the very middle of the Communion office.

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Then and there it was that he first of all made a COVENANT with the Lord and with the people, just as did the Jewish kings of whose coronations the Bible tells.* He will solemnly promise to rule according to law, to maintain the reformed religion, to uphold the Church of God; this he promises to *us*; then he rises from his chair, goes again to the altar, kneels there, and "laying his right hand upon the holy gospel in the great Bible," he vows the same to Almighty God; he vows it with his lips, and then he puts it into writing.

Then comes the ANOINTING. I want you to notice, my dear children, how every part of this great Coronation Service is borrowed from the Bible; it is steeped in the religion God has revealed to us. Why does the Archbishop take the holy anointing oil and pour some of it on the crown of the King's head and on the palms of both hands? The service itself tells us why; it is because kings, priests and prophets were anointed of old time among the chosen people. It is, for example, because "Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anointed King Solomon." And what, moreover, do we call our Saviour? We call Him "the Christ," which means "The Anointed," because He was anointed with the Holy Ghost, as we want our King to be. And

* 2 Kings xxiii. 3.

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that is why when the anointing takes place they first sing the hymn, *Veni, Creator Spiritus*, "Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire"—a prayer, you see, for the gift of God's good Spirit. And when that hymn - prayer is ended, the Archbishop offers another and similar prayer—and one, too, just like that in the Confirmation Service when the bishop asks God for the Holy Spirit for the candidates. Why these repeated prayers—and all for the same holy gift? Because that gift alone can make our King GOD'S king; that alone can make him a good king! And we look for God to give His Spirit in and through the anointing: that is only the "outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual grace given unto him." I said I would show you how you can help the Archbishop. You can help him by joining your prayers to his; and remember, God has faithfully promised "the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him," and children's *prayers* are just as acceptable to God as were children's *praises* when they sang their Hosannas to the Son of David. And this anointing, you must understand, is the true coronation; it is the consecration of the lawful king to be the "minister" or officer of God, God's judge, God's priest, God's captain. That is why the King now sits in the chair of King Edward the Confessor, which rests upon

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the stone brought by Edward the First from Scone Abbey in Scotland, the stone on which the Scottish kings were seated when they were crowned; that is why, when the Archbishop takes the spoon filled with the consecrated oil and pours some of it upon the King, on the crown of his head and the palms of his hands, in the form of a cross, four Knights of the Garter will hold over him a canopy of silk or of cloth of gold. The anointing, you see, is much more than the crowning. But, solemn as is this moment, we must not linger over this holy and ancient rite; there is still much to be seen and learnt. The next thing is the Presentation of the SPURS AND SWORD, for the King is both the leader and commander of the Army and the fount of all justice. Do you observe that even these spurs and that sword have been laid on the altar of God and are returned to the altar, after the King has accepted them. Nor are they presented without prayer; indeed, everything in this service is hallowed by the word of God and by prayer; everything bears the mark and imprint of our religion. That is true of the ROYAL ROBE or DALMATIC which is now put upon the King: that dalmatic is an ecclesiastical garment and it stamps him as a priest or bishop. It is curious, I may say, how much of the ceremonial of the Coronation resembles that used

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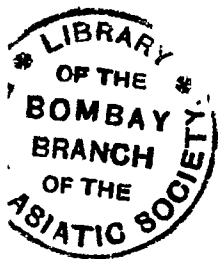
in the Middle Ages in the consecration of a bishop. And the King is a bishop or overseer, certainly of the realm and in some sense of the Church. It is true, again, of the ORB or ball of gold with the cross upon it which is now put into his right hand; that has the mark of God; it is to remind him and us that "the whole world is subject to the power and empire of Christ our Redeemer." It is also true of the RING, "the ensign of kingly dignity and defence of the Catholic faith," for that ring, which the Archbishop puts with prayer on the fourth finger of the King's right hand, has a cross engraved thereon; it is true of the SCEPTRE, "the ensign of power and justice" which is put into King Edward's right hand; that is tipped with a cross, as is also the ROD with a dove—a symbol of equity and mercy—which he holds in his left hand. The CROWN again is put upon his head with prayer, and it is brought to him straight from the altar of God; and see, it no sooner rests on the King's head than the peers put on their coronets—or little crowns—to signify that they hold their baronies or earldoms under the King as he holds his kingdom under God—and then once again the Abbey resounds with deafening cries of "God save the King!" and again the trumpets sound, and outside the church the guns of the Tower announce to the world that England has once more a crowned

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and anointed sovereign. And what next? The next thing is that the Archbishop presents the BIBLE to the King, just as the high priest gave to the Jewish king the testimony, and just as, at his consecration, they deliver the Bible to a bishop. Yes, he gives him the Word of God to be the law of his life and the guide of his reign: but you shall hear the very words that will be used:—"Our gracious King, we present you with this *Book*, the most valuable thing that this world affords. Here is wisdom; this is the royal law. These are the lively oracles of God. Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this book: that keep and do the things contained in it." And what after this? Why, now, "the King, having been thus anointed and crowned, and having received all the ensigns of royalty," the Archbishop "solemnly blesseth him;" that is to say, he invokes *God's* blessing upon him. Then they sing the *Te Deum*, to praise God for all His gifts and goodness, and then the King takes the Bread of God, and drinks the Cup of Christ; he will go forth to his duty strengthened with this heavenly food. You see that nothing that Christian men can do is left undone to make the Coronation a thoroughly religious service, to stamp the King as the chosen of God, and to impress him with a sense of his awful responsibilities. No, nothing that I can think of could be added to the

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Service. But one thing it wants to make it effective, and that is the prayers of the English people. We are expressly commanded to offer prayers and supplications and thanksgiving for *kings*—and we do it week by week and day by day in our churches. But the Coronation is a special thing, and it calls for special intercession. Pray God, dear children, pray Him with all your hearts, to save and bless King Edward. Do not suppose for a moment that your prayers can do no good or make no difference. What are those words which our Saviour quoted from the Psalms:—"Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast *perfected praise*?" Then I say that your prayers are the very thing that is needed to perfect this Coronation. All the pomp and the splendour will be of no avail without prayer, and prayer will be offered at every turn of the Service, and I hope that in all those prayers you, the children of England, will have a share.



THE END



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